

N^o 35. *Friday, April 7.*

THE Port and Town of *Gibraltar* being become the Subject of most Conversation, and its Preservation the Object of every honest Man's Hopes and Wishes; the great Consequence of it to this Kingdom never more justly deserved our Attention than at this Time, if consider'd only in *two* Points; *first*, as it preserves to us the Convenience, Protection and Security of our Trade to the *Streights*, above That of all other Nations; more especially in Regard to the *Algerines* and *Saltee-men*, who are influenced by it to continue their *Treaties* made with us; which they never do longer with any other Nation than till they find it their Interest to break them; *Secondly*, in respect to the great Advantage, which the Possession of that Place hath already given us, when in War with *France* and *Spain*; and consequently will always give us again upon the like Occasions, whilst we continue to keep it.

First, in respect to our *Trade*; for as it commands the Passage or Entrance of all our Navigation into the *Mediterranean*, both in Peace and War; so it is equally necessary, and as much our Interest to keep it ourselves, as it is for any Gentleman to keep Possession of the Gate, which leads to his own House; it being in the Power of Those, who possess this Port, at all Times to interrupt, annoy, or hinder whom they shall think fit in their Trade, by keeping only *two* or *three* Ships of War constantly on that Station; in the same Manner almost as the *Danes*, by the Possession of *Elfsineur*,
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command the Passage into, and out of the *Baltick*; so that if this Port were in the Hands of any other Nation, it would be in their Power likewise either to permit us to navigate or trade within the *Streights* or not, as they should think fit; unless a very strong Squadron were constantly kept at the Entrance of the *Streights-Mouth* to secure the Passage, and to be relieved from Time to Time by fresh Ships; which would put us to a much greater Expence than we are now at, in keeping the Place in Dispute.

Before *England* was in Possession of *Tangier*, on the opposite Side of the *Streights*, we were never able to deal with the *Algerines* and other *Turkish Rovers*; who, for near a hundred Years, had carried on a *successful piratick War* against the Commerce of this Nation, and never could be reduced; till, by the Situation and our Possession of the above mention'd Place, we distressed them so much, not only by taking their Ships going in and coming out of the *Streights*, but also by retaking such of their Prizes, as they had taken in the Ocean, that at last they were forced to be content with such a Peace as we would give them; the Continuance of which is now owing to nothing so much as to our having been, for many Years past and at present, in the same Condition to chastise those *Rovers*, by the Possession of *Gibraltar*, as we were before by the Possession of *Tangier*.

The Security of our *Italian, Turkey, and Fish Trades* intirely depends on our Possession of this Place; and should we ever lose it, or part with it, it is very reasonable to believe that both the *Algerines* and *Sallee-men* would soon break with us again; so that, in such a Case, the abovesaid Branches of Trade would almost wholly fall into the Hands of our Rivals the *French* from *Marseilles*; who, by their Situation, are always ready at Hand to furnish those Markets, as soon as they are in Want; while we, on our Part, shall be obliged to carry on that Trade by the tedious Methods of

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Fleets and *Convoys*; and, at last, perhaps, come long after the Market is supplied by our *Rivals*. Besides all This, the Article of *Insurance*, which would certainly run much higher than usual under these Circumstances, would prove a heavy Charge on our Goods, more than on Those of other Traders, which would thereby very much affect those Branches of our Trade and Navigation.

Nay, the Mischief would not stop here; for as the *Algerines*, of late Years, cruise in Summer Time at the Mouth of our Channel (where they lately took a very rich *Ostend East-India Ship*) and as some of them have also come into our very Ports two or three Years successively; so it is possible, that if we should lose *Gibraltar*, they may become, being so well acquainted with our Channel, a much more dangerous Enemy to us, than ever they were formerly; and may attack all our Trade in general, as the *St. Malo* Privateers did in the late Wars, whenever they shall find that they can carry home their Prizes without Interruption; which is not to be done, unless we should be dispossessed of *Gibraltar*, and thereby take the Bridle, which had hitherto restrained them, out of their Mouths.

Secondly, in Respect to our Neighbours; *Gibraltar* is situated in such a Manner, that it is in the Power of the present Possessors to cut off any naval Communication, between one Port and another, of each of those *two very powerful Kingdoms*, with which we have had such frequent Occasions to be at War for almost these forty Years past; who would soon turn the Tables upon us, if they should recover this Place out of our Hands; especially in Times of any Rupture between us; nothing being more self-evident than that it gives to Those, who are Masters of it, the Sovereignty and Command of the Commerce and Navigation of the *Mediterranean Sea*, and makes it impracticable for any other Nation to trade there, without

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their Leave. And farther, by our Possession of this Place, all Nations within the *Mediterranean* will be obliged to court our Friendship, or fear our Power; particularly the *pyratick States*; who, beholding Vengeance so near at Hand, will be thereby deterred from attempting to interrupt our Trade, while they are destroying that of all others.

Neither is this Advantage all that we reap from the Possession of *Gibraltar*; for it hath put into our Hands almost all the *Freight-Trade* into the *Mediterranean* for many Years past; especially That of the *Hamburgers* and *Hollanders*, who have made use of *British* Bottoms only, to carry on their Commerce in those Seas, till very lately; when the *Dutch* obtained a Peace with the *Algerines*, as it is said by our Means; whereby we are likely to lose one of the greatest Advantages at present belonging to the Navigation of *Great-Britain*; which we before enjoyed, whilst those Merchants made use of *English* Ships, finding it dangerous to venture their Estates in any other.

But laying aside all other Considerations, there cannot be a stronger Proof of the Importance, which the Possession of this Place hath been to us, than that it hath in a Manner destroyed the naval Power of *France* from the Hour of our taking it to the Conclusion of the second *French War*; nor indeed could they ever send any naval Stores round about into those Seas, without an apparent Danger of their falling into our Hands, in going through the *Streights*; so that the greatest Part of their Fleet hath become useless ever since, and never appeared at Sea again, but lay rotting in their Harbours.

It would be needless to inforce this Argument with many other Instances, which might be given of the Advantage of this Port; but it must not be forgot that its Promixity to *Cadiz*, the great Mart and Centre of almost all the Riches of *America*, gives us the greatest Opportunity of commanding that Port, and the

and the Trade frequenting it from the *West-Indies*; which, in Time of War with *Spain*, may be reckoned of no small Consideration or Importance.

Whether therefore we look on *Gibraltar* either in a mercantile or a political Light; first, as it not only secures all our own Commerce to *Italy*, *Africa*, and the *Levant*, from the Insults and Annoyance of those terrible Enemies the *Algerines* and other *Turkish Rovers*; but also helps us to the *Carriage-Trade* of several other Nations; or, secondly, as it cuts off all Communication between the Ports of our most formidable Rivals, and thereby renders their naval Force very precarious and inconsiderable; the Possession of this Place seems to be of such Importance, that I am at a Loss to guess what *Equivalent* could be given us for it. I am sure, at least, that any one of the foregoing Considerations, taken singly, would more than over-balance all the Expence, which the Nation at present feels on that Account.

But once more, and to conclude. As the Advantages of *Gibraltar*, which result to this Kingdom from the foregoing Particulars, are fully confirm'd and demonstrated by the Experience of many Years past; so the Preservation of it, at this Time, is of much greater Importance than it ever was before, as will appear by considering the present State of Affairs; that *Manufactures* are springing up in most Parts of *Europe*; and that several powerful States are endeavouring to vie with us in Commerce and a Maritime Force; which ought to put us on the strictest Guard, and determine us not to part with a Place, which is manifestly of so much Advantage, by securing and improving our own Trade and Navigation; as well as by defeating the Attempts of our Enemies and Rivals.

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